The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers / L'Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes

CASLT/ACPLS

NEWS RELEASE

Canadian Schools Encouraged to Celebrate 2008: UN International Year of Languages

OTTAWA, April 28th, 2008 – The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) is distributing teacher kits to mark 2008 as the UNESCO International Year of Languages and to increase multi-language awareness in classrooms, schools and communities. Entitled *Celebrating the Year of Languages!*, the kit includes four multilingual poster/teaching tools and a teacher guide with activity ideas that feature the benefits of language learning. Funding for the distribution of the kit was received from the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Teachers are invited to encourage students to put on plays, watch foreign movies, identify bilingual and multilingual role models to emulate, reflect on the main reasons for learning languages as well as the opportunities language learning provides, among other activities. The teaching and learning suggestions underscore the importance of language learning in developing the full human potential – connecting with others, opening mind and spirit to differences, recognizing similarities and embracing cultural opportunities.

According to CASLT President John Erskine, Canadian schools have so much to gain by embarking in the 2008 Year of Languages Celebrations. "This year presents an exceptional opportunity to get students excited about learning not only a second language, but even a third or fourth! Languages truly open the world for our students and this year, Canadian schools have a golden opportunity to celebrate, nurture and highlight the learning of languages as treasures that enrich them throughout life. The activities suggested in the CASLT kit enable our teachers to be effective ambassadors for language learning among students, parents and their communities".

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2008 the International Year of Languages in May 2007. UNESCO has been put in charge of leading this event, inviting governments, civil society organizations, educational institutions, professional associations and all other stakeholders to increase their own activities to promote and protect all languages.

Established in 1970, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) increases awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the importance of second language learning and teaching throughout Canada and promotes the advancement of professional excellence among language educators. See www.caslt.org for more information.

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